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ABSTRACT

The Rotter Internal-External (I-E) Scale, the Academic Interest Measures-Educational Testing Service (AIMS-ETS) Survey, and a demographic questionnaire were administered to 541 Catholic high school students. Variance analysis revealed that internals were significantly differentiated from externals on 15 AIMS (life goals) in the 31-item AIMS-ETS Survey. The internal group rated health, security, peace of mind, having friends, building a better world, and being recognized as a competent as significantly more important than externals. The demographic data indicates that older students tended to be significantly more internal. Internals also expressed a significantly higher desire to attend church services. (Author/DEP)

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LOCUS OF CONTROL AND STUDENT AIMS IN A HIGH SCHOOL SETTING

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Locus of Control and Student Aims in a High School Setting

The social learning theory developed by Julian B. Rotter explained the generalized expectancies with which subjects viewed reinforcement. When a subject perceived a reinforcement as "contingent upon his behavior or personal characteristics" he was said to be viewing with an internal locus of control. When a subject viewed a reinforcement as not being entirely contingent upon his actions the residual became luck, chance or powerful others, and the subject was said to have an external locus of control (Rotter, 1966).

This study of the students at a Catholic high school examined the aims or goals of the internal group (as represented by the lower 27% of the population measured by the Rotter I-E scale) and the external group (as represented by the upper 27% on the Rotter I-E scale). The AIMS-ETS Survey was used to arrive at a statement of individual students' aims in life.

Our objective was to investigate the similarities and differences between students who scored low on the Rotter scale (internal group) and those who scored high (external group) on their life goals (aims). It was our contention that (1) there would be a number of aims which would delineate the internal subjects from the external subjects. It was expected that internals would rate significantly higher on "to attain peace of mind, to make this a better world, to be considered good in most things that you do, and to be a very educated person." (2) It was thought that both groups would rate equally on "to be in good health, to have money enough for a home of your own, to have enough money for health and comfort, to enjoy life with as few worries as possible and to travel."

METHOD

Subjects

The 541 students of a Catholic high school were the subjects of this study. Of these 541, 313 (58%) were males and 228 (42%) were females. Their ages ranged from 13 to 18. Eighty-nine percent of the students came from an urban area while 11% listed their home settings as rural. The four years of high school were equally represented: 26% (143) were freshmen; 26% (139) sophomores; 25% (136) juniors; and 23% (123) seniors. Student's religion was reported as 89% Catholic; 5% Protestant; 1% Jewish; 3% none; and 2% other.

Instruments

The instruments used in this study were the Rotter Internal-External Locus of Control Scale (Rotter, 1966), the AIMS-ETS Survey (Educational Testing Service), and a demographic questionnaire.

The Rotter Scale is build upon the pioneer efforts of Phares (1957) and James (1957) who had developed a rough I-E scale as part of their doctoral programs. The basic instrument is in a 29-item forced choice format. Six of the 29 items are fillers and are not counted in the scoring.

The purpose of the fillers is to disguise the purpose of the test. A low score indicates internality and a high score, externality. It is relatively free from bias due to social desirability correlation with Marlowe-Crowne -.07 to -.35 (Rotter, 1966). Test-retest reliabilities are reported to range from .49 to .83 (Rotter, 1966).

The AIMS-ETS questionnaire consists of 31 Likert-type items presented in the form with 7 possible choices ranging from "Extremely important" to "Extremely unimportant." Students were instructed as follows:

"There are no right or wrong responses about the following statements. We are interested in your personal attitude and impressions in regard to each statement. Therefore feel free to express your personal opinion by circling the appropriate response."

Demographic questionnaire was administered covering such variables as sex, age, grade in school, mother living, father living, father and mother's current job classification, religion, church attendance, desired church attendance and family constellation.

Internals versus Externals

The 515 students who answered the total survey were divided into two groups on the basis of their Rotter scores: (a) the low 27% (internal, 139 subjects) and (b) the high 27% group (external, 139 subjects). To determine which of the aims and demographic attributes would differentiate internals from externals one-way analyses of variance were computed. Table 1 explains the variable codes. Table 2 summarizes the results.

Insert Table 1

Insert Table 2

Mean differences indicate that internals, as compared to externals, showed significantly higher mean scores on 15 of the individual items in the AIMS-ETS Survey: Be in good health ($p = .05$), to have good friends ($p<.05$), to get a sense of security out of life ($p<.05$), to attain peace of mind ($p<.01$), to have a happy old age ($p<.001$), make this a better world ($p<01$), to be considered good in most things that you do ($p<.01$), to lead a peaceful home life ($p<.05$), to be very educated person ($p<.01$),

to do your duty according to the moral law ($p<.0001$), to be looked up to and recognized as an important person ($p = .01$), to save money for old age ($p<.01$), to have many friends ($p = .01$), to help those in need ($p = .01$), and to be guided in one's life by religious concepts ($p<.01$). The two groups were also distinguished on the following demographic questions: age ($p<.001$), grade ($p<.01$), desire to attend church ($p = .05$), and the total of the AIMS-ETS Survey ($p = .01$).

It should be pointed out that all of the above survey items were rated highly by both groups. However, internals did rate 48% of the AIMS-ETS Survey significantly higher than externals. Both of our original concepts were thus supported: there were 15 AIM items (listed above) that did distinguish internals from externals. There were, in addition, numerous shared values between the two groups, i.e. no statistical differences: to bring up children well, to attain a deep and lasting love, to have a happy home life, to have an interesting job, to have enough money for a home of your own, to have enough money for health and comfort, to get along well with other people, to feel that you are as good as anyone else, to be admired for what you do, to enjoy life with as few worries as possible, to travel, to have success in the opinion of others, to be physically strong, to be a person of great influence over others, to be rich, and to attain great fame. It seems that the strength in the responses on these 16 items indicates that many of the values were desired equally by each group of subjects.

DISCUSSION

The data did distinguish internals from externals (contention 1) on a number of variables. For example, internals strive for "a happy old age, and desire to have many, and many good friends." In addition, an

altruistic strain is uncovered in the internals' desire "to help those in need" and in their goal "to make this a better world." Internals did rate significantly higher the four questions that we had speculated that they would: "To attain peace of mind, to make this a better world, to be considered good in most things that you do and to be a very educated person."

There is support of our contention that there are shared aims between the two groups. Four of the five items, "To have enough money for a home of your own, to have enough money for health and comfort, to enjoy life with as few worries as possible, and to travel" that we predicted were shared by both groups; however, to "be in good health" was rated significantly higher by internals ($p = .05$).

There seem to be several implications from this work. Internal students from the data seem to reflect the philosophies of many of our contemporary institutions, e.g. "to be a very educated person," to "have a more moral society," significantly more than external students. Internality, then should be encouraged in our institutions. This is particularly true for institutions that are religiously (values) oriented since internals choose with significant frequency "to live their lives by religious principles" and they exhibit more of a "desire to attend church services." It seems important to structure school programs so that students experience a greater sense of their own inner strength and less dependence on luck, chance or powerful others. Internality is a more mentally healthy and optimistic starting point, and now it seems from our data that it also affords an important climate for the inculcation of more of society's aims as contained in the philosophy of many of our institutions.

SUMMARY

The Rotter I-E Scale, the AIMS-ETS Survey, and a demographic questionnaire were administered to 541 Catholic high school students. Variance analyses revealed that internals were significantly differentiated from externals on 15 AIMS (life goals) in the 31-item AIMS-ETS Survey ($p<.05$). The internal group rated health, security, peace of mind, having friends, building a better world, and being recognized as competent as significantly more important than externals. The demographic data indicates that older students tended to be significantly more internal ($p<.001$). Internals also expressed a significantly higher desire to attend church services ($p = .05$).

Table 1

Item Code Explanation for Table 2

Item Name	Code Explanation
Age	Current age in years
Grade	Grade in high school 1 = freshman 2 = sophomore 3 = junior 4 = senior
Fr Grade	Highest grade in school completed by your father in years
Fr Cur Job	Father's current or last paid job 5 = professional 4 = semi-professional or technical 3 = owner of business 2 = clerical, sales 1 = semi-skilled
M. Grade	Highest grade in school completed by your mother in years
M. Cur Job	Mother's current or last paid job 5 = professional 4 = semi-professional or technical 3 = owner of business 2 = clerical, sales 1 = semi-skilled
Chatt	Church attendance 1 = rarely or never 2 = once, twice a year 3 = more than twice a year 4 = once a month 5 = 2 or 3 times a month 6 = once a week 7 = 2 or 3 times a week
Deschatt	How often you would like to attend church
Toted	How much education would subject like to have in years
Totaims	Total score on the AIMS survey

Table 1 (continued)

AIM Response Sets

7 = very strongly agree
6 = strongly agree
5 = agree
4 = undecided
3 = disagree
2 = strongly disagree
1 = very strongly disagree

AIM Item Number	Item
1	To be in good health
2	To bring up children well
3	To attain a deep and lasting love
4	To have a happy home life
5	To have an interesting job
6	To have money enough for a home of your own
7	To have good friends
8	To get a sense of security out of life
9	To attain peace of mind
10	To have a happy old age
11	To have enough money for health and comfort
12	To get along well with other people
13	To make this a better world
14	To be considered good in most things that you do
15	To lead a peaceful home life
16	To feel that you are as good as anyone else
17	To be a very educated person
18	To do your duty according to moral law
19	To be looked up to and recognized as an important person
20	To be admired for what you do
21	To save money for old age
22	To enjoy life with as few worries as possible
23	To travel
24	To have many friends
25	To have success in the opinion of others
26	To help those in need
27	To be physically strong
28	To be guided in one's life by religious concepts
29	To be a person of great influence over others
30	To be rich
31	To attain great fame

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, F Ratios, and Probability Figures for the Lower 27% of the Population (N=139) Internals, and the Upper 27% of the Population (N=139) Externals

Variable	Internals Mean	Internals SD	Externals Mean	Externals SD	F	P
Age	15.7	1.1	15.2	1.1	16.07	.001
Grade in H.S.	2.7	1.0	2.3	1.1	8.66	.004
Fr Grade in School	13.4	3.2	13.3	2.6	.04	.830
Fr Current Job	3.1	1 5	2.9	1.4	.45	.508
M. Grade in School	13.1	2.2	12.9	1.9	.61	.560
M. Current Job	3.0	1.5	3.3	1.4	1.79	.180
Church Attendance	5.4	1.4	5.2	1.6	1.15	.283
Desired Church Atten.	4.8	2.0	4.4	2.1	3.73	.052
Desired Total Educ. by Student	16.3	2.7	16.1	2.4	.46	.507
Total Score on AIM-ETS Survey	174.1	21.8	167.2	23.0	6.41	.012
Individual Items on AIM Survey						
Aim 1	6.5	.7	6.3	.8	3.76	.051
Aim 2	6.5	.7	6.3	.9	2.86	.088
Aim 3	6.3	.9	6.2	1.1	.53	.530
Aim 4	6.4	.8	6.3	1.1	1.06	.305
Aim 5	6.3	.8	6.1	.9	3.31	.066
Aim 6	5.9	1.2	5.8	1.1	.14	.708
Aim 7	6.5	.7	6.3	.9	3.94	.045
Aim 8	6.1	.9	5.9	1.1	4.33	.036
Aim 9	6.2	.9	5.8	1.2	9.30	.003
Aim 10	5.8	1.1	5.3	1.4	10.15	.002
Aim 11	5.9	1.1	5.7	1.1	1.99	.156
Aim 12	6.3	.8	6.1	.9	3.3	.065
Aim 13	6.2	.9	5.8	1.1	9.86	.002
Aim 14	5.8	1.1	5.4	1.26	8.95	.003
Aim 15	6.1	.9	5.9	1.09	3.90	.046
Aim 16	5.7	1.4	5.5	1.29	1.42	.232
Aim 17	5.5	1.3	5.1	1.43	7.64	.006
Aim 18	5.5	1.1	4.9	1.23	20.77	.001
Aim 19	4.9	1.4	4.5	1.37	5.97	.014
Aim 20	5.2	1.2	5.0	1.9	3.07	.077
Aim 21	5.3	1.2	4.8	1.41	10.20	.002
Aim 22	5.4	1.4	5.3	1.33	.40	.534
Aim 23	5.8	1.1	5.7	1.33	.56	.538
Aim 24	6.1	1.1	5.8	1.25	6.46	.011
Aim 25	5.0	1.4	4.8	1.38	.93	.663
Aim 26	6.2	.9	5.9	1.02	6.20	.013
Aim 27	5.3	1.3	5.2	1.10	.31	.583
Aim 28	4.8	1.4	4.3	1.22	9.45	.003
Aim 29	4.4	1.4	4.1	1.28	2.77	.093
Aim 30	4.1	1.5	4.2	1.73	.08	.776
Aim 31	3.9	1.5	3.7	1.64	.67	.580

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